

## Tips for Battling Burnout

**SOURCE: Cal State Fullerton / College of Business**

Here are several tips for avoiding burnout. But don't just read them and plunge back into things: Incorporate them into your lifestyle. You owe it to yourself and your department to guard against burnout so you can keep providing people the top-notch service they deserve.

1. **Never take work personally.** When people complain, they are not complaining about you personally. Keep in mind that even when people lash out, their frustration is over the discrepancy between what they want and what they are receiving. They don't know you; it is just human nature for them to strike out at the closest target.
2. **Don't take problems home.** Give your work complete attention while you are "on duty", but leave it there when you go home at night. In the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Finish each day and be done with it.... Tomorrow is a new day; begin it well and serenely."
3. **Find ways to reduce stress.** Yes, it has become a cliché to recommend exercise to reduce stress. But exercise has proved to be nature's true stress reliever. Find a physical activity you enjoy (even walking is helpful) and pursue it with the passion you pursue your work.
4. **Get help from others.** Don't let yourself feel isolated and alone. Your coworkers are going through their share of stress-building situations. Talk them over together. You'll feel better.
5. **Remember the 'good news'.** People usually [come to the courts] with problems, not praise. But don't let that give you a warped perspective of the world. Even though people may start out unhappy, they can become satisfied once you handle their issue. Fill in your mental scorecard with the 'good news' to keep your day's work in perspective.

## Five Ways to Add Some Fun to Your Workday

No matter where you work, you probably suffer from time to time through days that seem as if they're never going to end. You can lighten your spirits by adding an element of fun to your workday. Here are some ideas:

1. **Work in a perk.** When you plan your day, include one item that you can look forward to, such as lunch with your best friend, your favorite treat after lunch, or a brisk refreshing walk at noon.
2. **Breathe.** Several times during the day, pause for three slow, deep, relaxing breaths. This helps clear your mind and calm your thoughts.
3. **Keep stress relievers on hand.** During a break, perform a fun activity that will let you rest the serious, logical part of your brain. A puzzle game, or a quick game of "shooting hoops" in your wastebasket using a wadded up sheet of crap paper can rejuvenate your energy level. You might even want to keep your favorite joke book on hand for super stressful times.
4. **Celebrate small victories.** Throw a 2 minute party with a treat from home, or quickly write out a thank you note for a coworker who helped you through a tough interaction. Both you and your colleague will get a much needed lift.
5. **Review your successes at the end of the day.** Think about what you did well and the people you helped. Dwelling on your mistakes and failed customer service interactions will magnify them unfairly. Learn what you can and let them go.

## Ten Tips for Keeping Cool Under Pressure

Take a brisk walk on your break. The oxygen will do you good!

Post motivational quotes in your work area.

Get more sleep at night.

Talk to positive people.

Share your feelings about work with friends and family – don't bottle them up!

Eat a light, healthy lunch.

Listen to motivational tapes or positive music on your way to work.

Make time for your hobbies.

Keep a funny picture near you so you remember to smile.

Allow yourself a daily five minute conversation with a friend.

### **At the End of the Day.....**

Spend a few moments reflecting on what you have accomplished. Tally up the good experiences against the bad. You might be surprised to find that on any given day, there are more positives than negatives.

Sure, there are always angry people and those you can never please. But now think about the successes: the person who took the time to say "Thank!" and really meant it. The complicated problem you solved for a court patron who was in need of critical information.

You are a professional – it's only natural to remember and be concerned about the negative contacts you experience. But don't let the negatives overwhelm you; take those few minutes to tally the successes.

You deserve to pat yourself on the back!